

## GSP Forum: The GSP Challenge of Being Global and Relevant to Global Policies

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selected books or reports on subjects related to global social policy could be included in the review section. It is also worthwhile exploring regional publishers across the regions, which never get represented in international journals. The South Asian region still has a number of such publishers and it is worth exploring how they can be better represented in the book review section. It may be a good idea to discuss how the link between *GSP* and a range of publishers can be more effectively worked out in future and defining the role that the Regional Editors must play in this process.

An important outcome of the collaboration between individuals who have been brought together on the Editorial Board and team is the creation of a network between some of the institutions from which the individuals belonged. Some of these have been formalized and others are in the process of being so. This is a task that the journal must carry forward, and we must continue to discuss possibilities for the future of this network. Given constraints in funding, what is the nature of the activities that this network proposes to promote across institutions? In what ways can the network contribute to the future of the journal? Maybe it is time for the Regional Editors to have some minimum support for creating a resource base of potential authors and publishers, which could strengthen collaborative initiatives and also the journal.

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### *The GSP Challenge of Being Global and Relevant to Global Policies*

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When *Global Social Policy* was started, social policies were still mostly discussed, debated and analysed in a national context, and international social policies were primarily about comparative social policies. Another problem with promoting a more global approach to social policy has been that in most of the 'development literature', the emphasis has been on poverty and analysis of poverty reduction efforts rather than on social policy. The name of the journal also invites thinking about potential social policy implemented at a global level. However, a journal called 'global' social policy has been in some ways problematic in relation to the critical mainstream emphasis on diversity and variation. Global social policy research and analysis is also produced by different academic disciplines, which results not only in an interesting journal, but also more work to ensure a sufficiently broad academic home ground and readership for the journal as well as seeking to 'translate' between disciplines.

Globalization has for its part influenced the journal, and the changing context of social policies in many countries has made the relevance of the *GSP* stronger and helped to articulate the case for a journal on global social policy.

Whether we like it or not, pension, health care and social sector reforms implemented in various countries have provided key reference points for debate and analysis across very divergent contexts. Some globally promoted models, such as individual savings accounts in health care, can also be seen as a particular global approach to social policy problems embracing an individualized and capital market driven model. This is at odds with models that emerge on the basis of national comparisons and experiences of social policies in different countries.

In comparison to social policies, global issues in health policies and health – which is my main field of expertise – were evident earlier because of the nature of illness and human biology, but also the more traditional role of epidemics and public health concerns in the global arena. It is also clear that some implications of globalization are more easily tracked from a sectoral point of view rather than a broader focus on social policy. This is especially so with respect to basic services agenda and the relationship between globalization and commercialization processes globally. A focus of health research, however, is more often geared towards particular aspects of health care and in many ways the research tradition on health policy is weaker than on social policy. This has meant that global health issues have been easier to debate than global health policies or the implications of globalization on health policies.

Two issues have been of particular significance for me in the context of *GSP*. First, the focus of the journal on social policy as part of public policy and the quest to be relevant and engaging in dialogue with global policy issues and policy-makers. This has meant that efforts have been made to maintain the Forum and Digest parts of the journal. It is clear that these sections require much more in terms of work and follow-up than the usual processing of academic articles. However, the focus on public policies and on reporting and debating global social policy concerns is an important part of *GSP* and these will remain an integral aspect of the journal. *GSP* has engaged with UN social agencies and NGOs involved with social development and these are likely to remain key constituencies for the journal.

Another crucial issue for me has been to make the journal more global, which is more easily said than done. I am confident that the problem is not that there are not competent scholars working on social policies in the South and around the globe, but is more an issue of the limits of our networks and links as well as the fact that additional funds need to be available to facilitate and enable truly global exchange. It is easy to be imperial, but to be actually global requires active effort and additional work. This is an ambitious aim and will require further resources. *GSP* has so far had external support to the journal from the Globalism and Social Policy Programme (GASPP) seminars, but new mechanisms need to be sought and especially those that allow more global participation in the production of the journal and the papers that are published. As it is only possible to publish papers that have been submitted to

*GSP*, we would also want to especially encourage academics and writers from the South to send papers for publication. We would also like to see more debate on issues concerning inequality, social development and social rights in the context of globalization in *GSP* in future. Such debates do not necessarily take place in the traditional social policy forums in spite of their crucial relevance to the practice of social policies within countries.

Finally, we want to welcome readers of *GSP* and authors writing to the journal to give us feedback and make comments and suggestions especially with respect to the Digest and Forum sections in terms of content and any other aspects in terms of the journal procedures, pricing or availability. It is important for us to hear your views and to respond to your ideas and suggestions.

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I did not realize I had an interest in global social policy until Bob Deacon informed me that I was, in fact, researching and publishing in that field. In the late 1990s, I was working on a team project examining the relationship between multilateral economic organizations (IMF, World Bank, WTO) and global social movements (women, environmental, labour). I was intrigued by the power of these institutions and the efforts of non-elite groups to either influence their policy or combat their effects. I wanted to know how the institutions adapted their rhetoric, structure or policy to deal with the social policy concerns of civic actors.

One of the reasons I was not aware that I was working in the field of social policy is that the study of international relations and social policy do not often meet. Although the two fields potentially have a great deal to contribute to each other, they have not yet done so. Social policy is usually examined in a national context while international relations has rarely turned its attention to social issues. This short Forum contribution is designed to explain this omission from the international relations side and suggest some ways that IR and social policy studies may enrich each other.

International relations was established as a separate field of enquiry in the UK following the First World War. Its reason for being was the need to understand and prevent the mistakes that had led to the loss of millions of lives between 1914 and 1918. For many years, the field continued to focus upon the issues of state conflict. Some traditions stressed the need to acquire power to ensure security, while other traditions sought the key to fostering cooperation between states. In either case, the focus was upon how states